Bennington Barner

BENNINGTON.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19,1922

THE PARSON'S PARAGRAPHS

Is there anything more interesting than a community at play? The other day t "flivvered" over a goodly stretch of Vermont highway, sampling geveral of its 57 varieties of washboard, gravel, asphalt and macadam, to jour with a community at play—for it was Community day at Wallingford.

Wallingford is fortunate in possessing, near the town, a body of water, that fles in the hollow of the hills, like a gleamhig jewel in the palm of a woman's hand. It's about fifteen minutes walk up the West Hill road, and the first view of the lake is sufficient in itself to cause one to linger awhile. The quiet surface unruffled, save by a leaping fish or a skimming bird, reflects the foliage of many trees that grow down to the waters edge.

"Quiet paths by silver lakes. Freely yielding golden hours To all those who pleasure find In the sound of insect life.

in the songs of divers birds, In the taste of wintergreen,

In the taste of wintergreen, In the flavors berries bear,

In the smell of forest trees, In the scent of woodland bloom,

In the music of the wind, Through the lofty, lonely nines."

On the eastern side of the take there is a stretch of woodland that makes a natural park. Situated on the slope of one of its hills is the site of the historical pageants, that have been presented by the villagers in the past years, and which offer delightful views of water and hill. Over 30 acres of this land was the gift of Mrs. A. G. Stone to the town, for the good of the present and the coming generations. It also serves as a memorial for hier husband, Addison G. Stone.

A park association has been formed, and they control the activities that are going on in an ever increasing number. In fact, one of the most popular resorts in Rutland County is Elfin Lake. Years ago it was known as "Fox Pond," and the only lure it seemed to possess was for the early morning angler who loved to get away from the sound of the hammers in the neighboring shops, as they pounded out the forks and hoes, and farmers implements, that were stupped to all parts of the world.

The folks had come from all parts of the town and neighboring villages to celebrate the day. A goodly company were they. To the music of the local band the games began. Of special interest were the water sports. Contests for boys and girls in diving and swimming, and in traveling by tub. Everybody seemed to be doing something, and happy in the doing of it. The principal form of entertainment was in a pageant of Indian life directed by a summer resident, who trained about 35 or 40 young people to depict interesting phases of the life of the original American. This was followed by a minstrel show in which over fifty black-faced folks fired jests and sang songs, and made local quips which left no unpleasant sting. Surely it was a good time for all. Then "the eats." Oh boy! Fraternal organizations will sometimes get outside of a clam-bake in fairly good time, and the principal part of a Sunday school picnic is supposed to center about the "refreshments," while the annual banquet of the county Fish and Game League, generally manages to hold down its victims for awhile, but for "eats" with a variety and abundance, commend me to a community cafeteria with the ability to respond when good digestion waits on appetite.

The big need of the present day is to get people to work together and one of the best means to bring this about is to encourage their playing together. This is more effective in producing a community spirit than any number of "drives, tag-day or community-chests."

If the parson can find in climate an influence upon moods and impulses, and in clouds the suggestion of religious symbolism surely there is something abundantly worth while in play. The old proverb says: "All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy." It is my opinion that such dullness makes for irreligion. God expects that we shall gather some form of enjoyment as we go through life, and when play is wholesome and of such nature as to stimulate unselfish reactions as in "team work," sac rifice plays "cooperative games" then there is found a substantial moral h fluence that makes for good, to say nothing of the physical values and

"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

WALTER THORPE.

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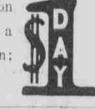
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